

Pergamon

Bull. Latin Am. Res., Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 143–164, 1998

0261–3050/98 $19.00 + 0.00

PII: S0261-3050(97)00085-5

Silent Racism and Intellectual Superiority in Peru

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Abstract—Historically, racism as it is understood in South Africa or in parts of the Southern United States has not existed in Peru. The absence or at least the existence to a lesser degree of this type of tension grants us a superiority over our northern neighbours. In Peru, emancipation of slaves was relatively easy. This is not to say that there do not exist prejudices against Indians, *cholos*, and blacks, however these prejudices have not been sanctioned by the law and they have, more than a profound racial feeling, an economic, social and cultural character. Colour does not prevent an aborigine, *mestizo*, or Negroid from occupying high positions if they can accumulate wealth or achieve political success. Notwithstanding these fortunate cases, there is an enormous distance between the *pongos* [serfs] of a highland hacienda ... and those highly cultured and refined Limeños, who routinely travel to Europe. This distance is neither racial, nor based on place of origin, rather it corresponds to what can be termed an historical state of things (Jorge Basadre, 1964: 4686).

Long ago Ruth Benedict pronounced that racism was a belief that can only be studied historically.[1] In this article I analyse the historical process by which Peruvian intellectuals have developed a definition of racism which denies the existence of racist practices in Peru, as exemplified by the long opening quote by one of Peru's most eminent historians. This formulation resulted from the conceptual usage and interrelation of 'race', 'culture', and 'class' in consecutive Peruvian nation-building projects throughout the present century. Significantly, as I will argue, the way intellectuals wielded these concepts was closely related to their own identities and political lives.

Several authors have proposed that the meanings of 'race' result from political struggle.[2] In this article I suggest that modern Peruvian academia was one of the crucial sites of a racial struggle that resulted in the Peruvian definition of race. Conceptually, the struggle entailed a dispute over whether race was to be defined by external appearances (mainly phenotype), or through such 'internal' qualities as morality, intelligence, and education. The debate pitted Limeño intellectuals against their provincial, and mainly highland (*serrano*) counterparts. The implicit, yet central, element in the discussion was the racial identity of the latter, whom the former (consensually defined as 'white') deemed inferior because of their highland origins and brown skin colour.[3] One consequence of the struggle was the silencing of the phenotype of *serrano* intellectuals, and their consideration as '*gente decente*' (decent folks) and therefore implicitly, as honorary 'whites'.[4] This modern racial alchemy was performed by stressing the pre-eminence of highland intellectuals' academic status over their phenotype. Eventually this practice yielded a notion of the 'intellectual' whose superiority was unquestioned and legitimised by his/her higher education. The procedure eventually generated what I deem 'silent racism,' namely the practice of 'legitimate'

exclusions, based on education and intelligence, while overtly condemning biological determinisms.

I divide my analysis into three conceptual periods, parts of which overlap chronologically. During the first moment (roughly 1910–1930) conservative and progressive intellectuals used 'race' (*raza*) as a central analytical category. Yet they emphatically rejected terminal biological determinisms, and instead coined a notion of race in which moral aspects prevailed. During the second period (1930–1960) both the official and oppositional intelligentsia discarded 'race' as a valid scientific concept. Instead, the former group shifted to 'culture' while the latter chose Marxist 'class' analysis as the theoretical tool to diagnose the country's problems and propose solutions. Class rhetoric, which also began in the thirties, reached its peak in the third period (1960–1980) when the leftist opposition dismissed both race and culture as 'false consciousness', and the state adopted economic definitions to classify Peruvians.

The paradox that this paper unveils is that, notwithstanding the academic and political silence into which race receded since the late 1930s, hierarchical, and exclusionary racial feelings permeated social relationships and regulated interactions even among intellectuals.[5] When 'culture' and 'class' rhetorically replaced race, they also derived their political legitimacy from the belief in the social superiority of 'proper' morality, higher intelligence, and academic education. During the first period these features were considered racial attributes, but during the last two they were 'naturalised' as cultural attributes or class privileges. Disavowing biologically defined race, while simultaneously considering that exclusions legitimately resulted from 'natural' cultural features or 'inevitable' class hierarchies, intellectuals are trapped in a discourse of silent racism that continues to abide by the historically forged Peruvian definition of race that privileged invisible, yet innate, qualities over biology and phenotype. Rather than cancelling it, 'culture' and 'class' silently reproduced the Peruvian scientific version of race coined at the turn of the century, and fostered the hegemony of racist practices among leftists and conservatives.

FIRST PERIOD. THE STRUGGLE THAT DEFINED RACE

From 1919 to 1930, Peru's president, Augusto B. Leguía, implemented a populist rhetoric which, like the man himself, became increasingly controversial during the course of his presidency. During those eleven years an increasingly powerful provincial, and mostly *serrano* — or highland — intelligentsia defied the superiority of Limeños and criticised the concentration of political power in Lima, which they labelled *centralismo*. Alternatively, provincials proposed *regionalismo*, or the distribution of state representation to regional (provincial) representatives.

The cultural construction of race in Peru hegemonically inscribed it in geography, and considered Coastal inhabitants (particularly Limeños) as 'white,' while deeming *serranos* '*cholos*' or close to Indians. Emilio Romero, a geographer from Puno remembers his first years in Lima, when Limeños showed their prejudice against *serranos* overtly:

> I will never forget my life in Lima at that time, the year of the centennial of national independence [1921]. The mornings in the patio of San Marcos [the oldest Limeño public university] were for us a glorious compensation for our provincial nostalgias, but after mid-day our Limeño friends disappeared ... we admired the great writers and teachers from Lima, but they were unreachable constellations for our humble

lives … Some time later, Víctor Andrés Belaúnde, always cordial, democrat to the core, commented on the discrimination against provincial intellectuals, and mentioned that in Lima, the person that could not boast of being Limeño, aspired at least, to be Arequipeño. (Romero *et al.*, 1979: 11–18)

Being Arequipeño meant being the least *serrano* among *serranos*, because although the department of Arequipa is located in the Southern highlands, it has a large Coastal area. Like race, the *regionalismo* vs *centralismo* dispute was also etched in the geography, and reproduced the dispute about the alleged inferiority of provincial intellectuals and the superiority of Limeños. Confirming the racial pitch of the political debate José Carlos Mariátegui, the founder of Peruvian Marxism, considered that '*regionalismo*' (…) more than a conflict between the capital and the provinces denotes a conflict between the Coastal and Spanish [white] Peru, and the *serrano* and indigenous Peru (Mariátegui, 1968: 164).

The first period came to an end when Luis Sánchez Cerro, an Army Colonel who, according to historian Jorge Basadre, was, 'a *cholo piurano*, who looked like a *mayordomo* [butler]', ousted Leguía (Basadre *et al.*, 1981: 24). With this coup the debate lost its initial impetus as many of its intellectual promoters left their original provinces, and moved to Lima where they entered state institutions.

What happened during those 11 years that permitted previously despised middle class provincial intellectuals to gain central positions previously occupied by Limeño aristocrats? Obviously, the different physical and social appearance of the new president does not explain the incorporation of provincial intellectuals to central positions. Moreover, except for the initial period of insurgence, these intellectuals did not support Luis M. Sánchez Cerro. Instead, support for this *cholo*-looking president came from a group within the aristocracy, antagonistic to Leguía, and certainly at odds with the provincials' proposals for *regionalismo*. The explanation for the political influence of provincial academics cannot be found exclusively in the political sphere, but instead in its historical intersection with Peruvian academic beliefs, and in the way these interacted with intellectuals' social identities, which in the 1920s were inevitably considered 'racial.' Because no fixed definition of 'race' ever existed in Europe or elsewhere, the notion was exceptionally malleable and a perfect vessel of subjetivities.[6] It is crucial therefore to consider the social feelings underpinning the development of dominant Peruvian notions of race.

As in the rest of Latin America, starting in the late nineteenth century and increasingly at the turn of the century, the notion of *política científica* (scientific politics) gained popularity in Peru.[7] Armed with the idea that scientific knowledge would prevent the mistakes that military *caudillos* (military leaders) had made, a new generation of intellectuals anointed themselves the politicians who would successfully build the nation. Scientific politics were not unique to Peru; the peculiarity of the Peruvian case lies in the linkage drawn between the exaltation of scientific knowledge, education, and the prevailing notion of race.

Notwithstanding its conceptual ambiguity, 'race' was an omnipresent notion throughout Latin America, undergirding every scientific and aesthetic discipline. Moreover, race was a crucial component of nation-building projects at the turn of the century.[8] Subscribing to positivism, dominant and subordinate Peruvian academics assigned to scientific education an almighty power capable of transforming anything, especially race. Javier Prado, a leading positivist philosopher, declared during his tenure as Dean of the Faculty of Letters at San Marcos University that: 'Thanks to education, the contemporary man can transform

his physical milieu and even his race'.[9] Beliefs in the overwhelming potential of education intertwined with idealism (or *espiritualismo*), another influential intellectual current in Peru.[10] Representatives of *idealismo* acknowledged the importance of education, but not just any education. The greatest kind of learning was the one that contributed to the moral enhancement of the people. One of the most influential proponents of this thought, Alejandro A. Deustua, believed that only an intellectual elite could lead the country to progress. Significantly, he believed that the supreme quality of this elite was its peerless moral standards (Cueto, 1982: 8).

Implicitly amalgamating beliefs in positivist 'education' with idealist 'morality,' the new generation of intellectuals subscribed to a hazy notion of 'race' which specifically rejected terminal biological differences, while accepting as legitimate racial hierarchies the 'intellectual' and 'moral' differences among groups of individuals.[11] Certainly, the standards to measure these differences were arbitrary, and indeed set by the elite.

Deeming these ideas racist is an overly simplistic and ahistorical reading. Compared with other Latin American countries, particularly Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, the new generation of Peruvian intellectuals probably stood out as anti-racist leaders.[12] The leftist intellectual José Carlos Mariátegui believed that the concept of 'biological race was a totally fictitious assumption,' and that 'the notion of inferior races was very useful to the white West in its objectives of expansion and conquest.'[13] On the other side of the political spectrum, Victor Andrés Belaúnde (1933: 11), the leader of the intellectual renewal of the political right, considered 'unacceptable and simplistic the ethnologists' conclusions about the inferiority of the aboriginal race, the defects and vices of *mestizaje* (miscegenation), and the biological degeneration of the whites'. Notwithstanding their historical anti-racism, the beliefs in 'innate' intelligence and moral differences that underpinned allegedly racial hierarchies, reproduced a racialised structure of feelings that tolerated legitimate exclusions and, as I explain below, outlasted the conceptual and political discrediting of 'race.'

Following popular Lamarckian ideas, Peruvian leftists and conservatives alike believed that physical characters shaped by 'the environment' could be biologically inherited.[14] The environment however was not neutral. Added to the geographical definition of race, also inscribed in it was an unequal distribution of education that privileged urban areas against the countryside.[15] This yielded a geo-political stratification whereby, while urbanites throughout the country were considered superior to rural inhabitants, Limeños, the residents of the allegedly most 'lettered city' (cf. Rama, 1996) were perceived as the most educated group. This scheme overlapped with the perceived geographical 'whiteness' of Limeños. Obviously, the intersection between Peruvian Lamarckianism and the positivist/idealist definition of race produced a contradictory tension between geographically ascribed phenotype/race and acquired education. *Serrano* intellectuals competed with Limeños as educated individuals. But their geographical racial identity potentially lumped them with the rest of the regional uneducated population, which, indeed, was considered non-white. According to Limeños' innermost racial feelings, *serranos* were mestizos: half-breeds of Spanish and Indian blood. This is what '*cholo serrano*' implied.

The racial struggle between *serranos* and Limeños took place during Leguía's *oncenio* (11 year government). It united *serranos* in spite of their political discrepancies, to propose their equal standing (if not their superiority) relative to Limeños. To counteract their alleged racial inferiority *serranos* wielded a gendered version of the racialised geographic background. They associated Limeños' 'whiteness' with the allegedly feminine and benign climate of the coastal landscape. The ensuing quote is very eloquent in this respect:

> Numbed by the ocean's undulating sensuality, the sky and the tropical climate, the Coast has nurtured only weak individuals and like a Greek Lesbos it has trembled before the stern, masculine vigour of the Sierra. The Coast has been the mistress of every Conquest, midwife of all exotic concoctions, it has deformed the contours of the national self.[16]

If being intellectuals made *serranos* comparable to Limeños, they even claimed superiority by emasculating the coastal landscape and its residents. Using gendered rhetoric to counteract Limeños' racial haughtiness, *serranos* carved their place in the country politics. By the end of the period they were outspoken politicians who both asserted their highland origins and wielded their intellectual knowledge to justify their positions. Consider the following quote:

> Limeños feel they are superior to *serranos* just because they were born in the capital (...) however current facts demonstrate that in the *Sierra* there are intellectuals that are able to fulfill brilliantly whichever distinguished position they are assigned, either in high politics or in public administration.[17]

Undoubtedly the period ended with the victory of a selected group of *serranos* who demonstrated an adequate mental endowment to lead the country. Asserting their lofty intellectual status, *serrano* academics, disregarding their physical appearance, displaced the definition of 'mestizos' from themselves to ignorant and immoral 'others.' This curbed Limeño references to *serrano* intellectuals' phenotype, and ultimately molded a definition of race that emphasised innate intelligence and morality and acquired education as its defining traits. Defining 'race' through 'internal' bio-moral qualities coincided with egalitarian ideas promoted by the peculiar combination of liberalism and strong Catholic inclination characteristic of modernising Limeño and provincial elites. Yet, disregarding skin colour did not mean cancelling race or racial feelings. Artfully expressing this subtlety, Basadre's opening quote mentioned: 'Colour does not prevent an aborigine, mestizo, or negroid from occupying high positions if they can accumulate wealth or achieve political success.' Skin colour was not an obstacle to their social promotion *if* individuals demonstrated adequate intellectual skills, that is if they could prove that they did not belong to the racial group that their colour denoted. Although conditioning promotion to intellectual excellence was indeed discriminatory, it was not explicitly so. Therefore it was not considered racist, and neither was the fact that skin colour and racial labels became affixed to 'incompetent' persons, while intellectual identities were potentially dissociated from them. This acquittal of racism seeped into later cultural and class rhetorics, as will be obvious in the ensuing sections.

OTHERING THE MESTIZO

By the mid-1920s *serrano* intellectuals braided *regionalismo* with *Indigenismo*, a very malleable political discourse that both, liberal and leftist politicians, used.[18] Broadly, *Indigenismo* was an intellectual social movement which sought to forge a Peruvian nation rooted in its pre-Hispanic tradition, allegedly the source of national identity. Its main proponents were *serrano* intellectuals, according to whom *Indigenismo* would produce a countrywide spiritual transformation that would, in turn, result in a unified and renovated culture/race purged of colonialism and rooted in national sentiments. This was the proposed foundation upon which the Peruvian nation could be constructed.

Following idealist precepts and countering the biologically determinist proposition that races produced culture, the undergirding notion of the *Indigenistas*' project was that culture could transform race. They promoted artistic manifestations representing Inca themes or the *serrano* landscape and peoples; connecting with the scientific impetus of the times, they also inspired archaeological research in pre-Hispanic sites and ethnological investigation of rural indigenous villages. Last but not least, *Indigenista* defence of the 'indigenous race' consisted in encouraging literacy campaigns and the improvement of Indians' labour conditions, without however 'altering' the indigenous 'soul', considered the deepest element of 'the culture.'

During Leguía's rule the *serrano* elite used *Indigenismo* to carve their own distinctive place as intellectuals on the central political stage.[19] Although its promoters perceived *Indigenismo* as a decolonising project like colonial projects in other places, *serrano* intellectuals wielded it to define themselves racially vis-à-vis the local 'others' that they aimed at controlling.[20] Because the local definition of race Marked intelligence as its defining trait, *Indigenismo* represented an academic doctrine that made Serrano academics equal to Limeños by stressing their intellectual achievement. In so doing, this definition unmarked their mestizo phenotype and implicitly 'whitened' them, or at least silenced references to their somatic features.[21] Eventually this dynamic would unmark all intellectuals racially, while displacing racial labels ('mestizo' and 'Indian') onto the 'others' they studied. Thus unmarked, *serrano* intellectuals joined the bio-moral category of *gente decente* (decent folk), reserved for describing elites. Skirting phenotypic similarities, brown-skinned (or plainly *serrano*) academics dissociated themselves from the racially marked *gente del pueblo*, the social label reserved for the Indian and mestizo 'others.'

Crucial to the unmarking of *serrano* intellectuals was their own rejection of *mestizaje*. Underpinning this attitude was the idea that races had their proper places, (and their corresponding occupations) which if violated resulted in degeneration.[22] This also served as the backdrop of *Indigenistas*' definition of Indians as a 'race of agriculturalists' whose ideal environment was the *ayllu*, then defined as a rural social collectivity organically related to the land. Applied to the definition of mestizo, the idea of a 'racial proper place' yielded a despicable regional character, a deformed Indian that had left the heaven of the *ayllu* and abandoned agriculture, their inherent activity. The most prominent *Indigenista* ideologue, Luis E. Valcárcel, scornfully called rural towns '*poblachos mestizos*.' There, the deserting Indian acquired an incipient literacy which he/she used to abuse his/her race. In the city, lacking the moral and intellectual tools to earn a living, Indians survived as beggars. If they succeeded, they became lazy tramps who lived at their concubine's expense. Consider Valcárcel's description of a *poblacho mestizo* and of mestizos, the racial type that supposedly flourished in such an environment:

> The horrible silence of mestizo towns. The midday sun wanders with leaden feet across the plaza. Then it leaves, setting behind the walls, sheds, the tumble-down church, the shabby houses ... worms lost in the subcutaneous galleries of this decomposing body that is the wretched mestizo town, men surface now and then, the sun chases them away, they return to their burrows ... What do these troglodytes do? They do nothing. They are the parasites, the scum of the sewer (...) the master of the wretched mestizo town is the quack lawyer [*leguleyo*], the '*kelkere*' [in Quechua, the person who spends all the time writing] ... the quack lawyer is secretly feared and abhorred [...] He exploits the whites and the aborigines equally. Lying is his job. Just as the gentleman is the highest product

of the white culture, so the quack lawyer is the best that our mestizo towns have created. (Valcárcel, 1925b: 44)

In sharp contrast stood the *ayllus*, the putative proper place of Indians. According to Valcárcel (1925a: 37),

> The *ayllus* breath happiness. The *ayllus* enkindle pure beauty. They are pieces of pure nature. The little Indian village forms spontaneously, grows and develops like the countryside trees, without subjection to any plan; the little houses group together like sheep in a herd ... the shepherd boy whistles; the guardian dog barks ... down (in the agricultural plots) the virile *chakitajllas* (foot plow) deflower the virginity that the corn fields recover every year.

Indigenista nationalist beliefs were compatible with ideas about the 'superiority' of racial purity vs. the 'inferiority' of hybridity.[23] The former was equivalent to industriousness, virility and moral beauty; the latter compared to filth, indolence, and moral ugliness. Given their potential mixed origins and thus their possible identification as hybrids, *Indigenistas*' conjectures may seem paradoxical. They were not.

Provincial intellectuals did not consider themselves 'mestizo' or Indian although they shared phenotype with those they considered 'inferior' racial types. The cultural construction of race in the Peruvian highlands did not conceive of phenotypical traits as racial markers.[24] Instead, 'race' was the result of an individual's relative social position indicated by formal education, but eventually moulded by geographical origin. Indians were assigned to the highest mountain environments, while residents of the low valleys were deemed 'mestizos.' Thus the higher the geographical altitude of an individual's origin, the lower his/her relative social standing and the closer he/she would be to Indianness. Yet, this position could be modified by academic training. The life of Alfonso Nuñez Buitrón, a well known physician from Puno, eloquently illustrates both the geographical demarcation of race and the influence of education in defining the race of individuals. It also depicts the social uneasiness that their blurred racial status could produce in the lives of *serrano* intellectuals.

> In the indigenous community of Jasana [where he worked] the inhabitants considered him a *misti* ... in the capital of the province of Azángaro, they called him Indian; however once he finished his education as a doctor they considered him *misti*. In Puno [the capital of the department] where he had studied in the Colegio San Carlos they labelled him a provincial Indian, but when he excelled among his classmates they considered him a *misti*. In Lima he was considered *serrano* and *provinciano* ... in the University of Arequipa they called him Indian and *chuño*, although later he gained access to a social category that was equal to that of his classmates. When he returned to Puno, and to his town, nobody called him Indian. (Tamayo Herrera, 1982: 39)[25]

The probabilities that an academic could be identified as mestizo or Indian during his/her lifetime were high. It depended on his/her place of origin, location, and the stage of his/her intellectual training. To spare themselves from being labelled mestizos, *serrano* academics redefined the category. They defined *mestizaje* as cultural hybridity and sanctioned it as degeneration. In a public speech, the brown-skinned Luis E. Valcárcel said:

> We still posses the marvellous tongue of the Great Empire's founders (...) but the victors' destructive labour continues to wear it away, to the point of reducing its

vocabulary to perhaps only a thousand words, making it more mestizo every day, making it lose its philological individuality. [Our project is] to cultivate the pure Quechua that is still preserved in certain places and cultivated by many illustrious individuals.[26]

Valcárcel's declaration countered the racial feelings of dominant Limeños, whose cultural certainty about the 'whiteness' they allegedly inherited from the Spanish colonisers, predisposed them to consider phenotype among the markers of mestizos. From the Limeños' viewpoint, individuals like Valcárcel were phenotypically hybrid. But appearances were rendered meaningless by the latter's idealist definition of race, which stressed instead intellectual capacity and moral/cultural purity. As intellectuals and heirs of the pure Inca culture, they were not mestizos. Moreover, in the particular case of Cuzqueños, presenting themselves as heirs of 'pure' Quechua language gave them a tangible trait of their otherwise intangible alleged cultural purity. By opposing it to the 'common' (hybrid) Quechua spoken by the populace, they cancelled the regional racial blurriness between elites and commoners that resulted from their shared phenotype. Granted, talking about education, erudition, and cultural purity, they were talking about social class and economic differences. Yet, in the early twentieth century, 'race' provided the key semantic terrain to settle social hierarchies.[27]

Serrano members of the elite needed to distance themselves from the lower classes and thus *Indigenista* or not, they regarded 'mestizos' as misplaced individuals who could not achieve proper education. The absence of allusions to physical traits is a recurrent characteristic in *Indigenistas*' descriptions of mestizos, whom instead they depict using references to their 'deficiencies' in both Quechua and Spanish, their ignorance, bad manners, deplorable social taste, and indeed their immorality. Regionally and nationally this definition distinguished brown-skinned intellectuals from ignorant '*cholos*' thus redefining the dominant Limeños' racial taxonomy based on phenotype.

In addition to solving a personal conundrum, the *serrano* proposal against hybridity coincided with the progressive counter reaction to conservative ideas that proposed cross-breeding *Indígenas* with coastal, and even foreign races, to create mestizos and improve the national stock (Portocarrero, 1995: 219–259). José Carlos Mariátegui (1968) for example wrote:

> To expect that indigenous emancipation will result from crossing the aborigine race with white European immigrants is an anti-sociological ingenuity, conceivable only in the rudimentary mind of an importer of merino sheep.

Mariátegui, like Valcárcel, also joined theories of racial degeneration to define *mestizaje* as a state of ignorance and immorality. In the mestizo, Mariátegui (1928) found 'imprecision and hybridism (…) that result from a dark predomination of negative sediments in a state of morbid and sordid stagnation.' Subscribing to degeneration theories had a crucial consequence that can help explain the differences between Peruvian and Mexican *Indigenismos*. Briefly, Mexican politicians led by Manuel Gamio and José Vasconcelos — whose personal racial identities were probably not at stake in Mexico — rejected notions of racial purity, and believed in the positive qualities of hybridity. With this theoretical support the Mexican state implemented a national project that promoted the improvement of the indigenous race, via cultural miscegenation. In Peru, in contrast, the prevailing *Indigenista* rejection of hybridity implied a nation-building project in which the 'assimilation of the Indian race' and the promotion of *mestizaje* were not viable solutions.[28] This was a main difference between *Indigenistas* (broadly defined) and the competing nationalist

project sponsored by the so-called *Arielistas* (after Enrique Rodo's *Ariel*), a conservative group led by Victor Andrés Belaúnde.[29] Defending himself from accusations of anti-Indian feelings, Belaúnde wrote:

> ... [twenty years ago] I earnestly sustained that the indigenous question was Peru's fundamental problem, and that it was our imperative historical mission to definitively assimilate the aborigine race to the contemporary civilisation ... (today) I believe that ... since our economic life rests on the Indian, it is fair to have him participate in our spiritual life.[30]

Both conservatives and progressives, like Belaúnde and Mariátegui, concurred in a definition of race that subordinated biology to the 'force of the spirit.' They also considered that the legacy of the Incas deserved respect and that the 'racial inferiority' of Indians merited political attention and 'improvement.' The crucial discrepancy between the two groups was how, where, and in what direction to achieve this improvement. Belaúnde and his followers considered that the Hispanic city as a 'source of social *mestizaje*, agricultural market centre, focus of industrial activity, and nucleus of religion and culture' was the ideal environment to educate and incorporate the Indian to the dominant 'spiritual life' (Belaúnde, 1964: 96). *Indigenistas*, in contrast, proposed that the regeneration of 'the Indian race' should take place in its 'natural habitat.' The denial of Indians' inferiority required that they remain in their putative proper place. According to Mariátegui (1929): 'In his native environment, as long as migration does not deform him, [the Indian] has nothing to envy in the mestizo.'

This disagreement (also inscribed in geography), was central to the historical definition of Peruvian racism. Although both tendencies were laden with racial thought, progressives translated the conservatives' choice of the Hispanic city as the 'proper' environment for Indian redemption as the annihilation of indigenous culture. The non-*Indigenista* position entered the national political/academic culture as synonymous with racism, equivalent to anti-Indian feelings. Conversely, the progressive proposal (seen as pro-Indian) was acquitted of racism even if it implied privileging racial/cultural purity against hybridity. Considering Mariátegui's initial frontal rejection of the notion of race, his scorn towards *mestizaje* may seem a contradiction, but it was not. What Mariátegui rejected was the terminal influence of biology in race, which represented at the time a progressive position. The absolute conceptual dismissal of 'race' was not historically possible during his life period. It became so a few years later.

SECOND PERIOD. CULTURE HIDES RACE: FROM *INDIO* TO *MESTIZO*, AND TO OFFICIAL *INDIGENISMO*

The second period starts in the 1930s and ends in the late 1960s. It starts and ends with two military coups, each subscribing to a different political ideology. While the first one, led by the *cholo* Luis Miguel Sánchez Cerro, received the support of the most conservative sectors, the second, led by Luis Velasco Alvarado, represented the most radical, progressive regime the country had seen. Throughout the period, APRA was the state's main opposition.

The 1930s marked a new political era in Peru when newly founded populist parties (APRA and the Communist Party) actively organised the electoral and clandestine state opposition. In the 1931 presidential election the candidates were Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, a coastal provincial politician, (and founder of APRA) and Eduardo Quispe Quispe,

a '*puneño indígena,*' and member of the Communist Party.[31] They were defeated by Luis M. Sánchez Cerro, the first *cholo*-looking President to receive the unconditional support of the aristocracy. To balance his appearance, according to historian Jorge Basadre, 'Limeño aristocrats taught him how to dress; young aristocrats chose his ties and shoes, and they even allowed him to flirt with high class ladies' (Basadre, 1981: 41–42).

During this period, *serrano* intellectuals occupied central academic stages in Lima. Emblematic of this victory was José Antonio Encinas' appointment in 1930, as Rector of the University of San Marcos, until then the stronghold of Limeños and aristocrats. Encinas, was a Puno-born lawyer who, along with Valcárcel, had inspired Mariátegui. He narrated his victory:

> The feudal castle that San Marcos had been until then tumbled in 1930. On its ruins we started building a new type of institution, one in which we would venerate everything that was our own ... the old and obsolete university ... had neglected our history, our geography, our social and economic problems. The new University sought to plough new furrows ... (Encinas, 1954: ii–xv)

As is obvious, intellectuals during this period continued to be absorbed in the project of imagining their nation. Still, overt references to 'race' were conspicuously absent from the vocabulary used to express it. Peruvian intellectuals, who had pioneered the rejection of racial biological determinisms in Latin America, joined the gradual world-wide dismissal of the notion of race. This tendency marked the period internationally; it became consensual as a result of World War II.[32] Given the idealist antecedents already prevalent in Peruvian academia, local intellectuals smoothly replaced 'race' with 'culture,' which later became known as 'ethnicity' in specialised anthropological circles.[33] Albeit as ethnic groups, the new concept continued to mark 'mestizos' and 'Indians.' The social construction of '*gente decente*' and their definition as real or honorary 'whites' remained unquestioned.

If during the previous period 'race' referred to 'a spiritual phenomenon,' during this second one 'the Spirit' became the reference itself. Consider the following quote by Uriel García, which he used as the introductory paragraph to his book *El Nuevo Indio*, which marked a turning point in racial/culture ideology: 'Our times cannot be those of the resurgence of the 'races' which created the original cultures of antiquity, nor can blood determine the current intellectual process, and therefore history. It seems instead that we have arrived at the predominance of the Spirit over Race and over blood' (García, 1930: 57).

Theories about 'racial purity' lost centre stage. They were replaced by miscegenation projects, which, needless to say, intellectuals conceived as a transitional spiritual condition.[34] Promoted by Apristas under the influence of the mexican José Vasconcelos, (who was now welcomed) miscegenation was considered an Indo-American process, which promoted the indigenous aspect that allegedly unified American cultures. In Peru it combined nicely with anti-imperialist Aprista rhetoric, and became the identity project that opposed the US sponsored Pan American continental program.[35] In this political context, Apristas and anti-state non-Apristas launched a defence of the mestizo portrayed as the real Peruvian type. 'The mestizo evolves in a scenario that has been invaded by Europeanising individuals; yet he slowly walks forward to his destiny ... with the definitive expression of a new ethnic value,' wrote Felipe Cossio del Pomar (1940), a member of the APRA party, exiled in Mexico.

Mestizaje was decidedly a discourse about the 'other.' Even when academics claimed *cholo* identity for themselves (as was the case of the promoters of Cuzqueño neo-Indianism)

they did so from their position as intellectuals, unmarked individuals who could, hence, claim any of the local forms of culture.[36] Like their *Indigenista* predecessors, champions of *mestizaje* promoted art as the quintessential spiritual manifestation. Yet their populist endeavour led them to specifically promote vernacular art, mostly handicrafts and folklore.

New *Indigenista* writers like Ciro Alegría and José María Arguedas flourished during this period. Both were *serranos*. The first belonged to APRA; the second was a political dilettante and one of the most successful representatives of this intellectual era. During this period Arguedas was a prolific writer; he published *Agua* in 1941, and *Los Ríos Profundos* in 1958. He was also an enthusiastic promoter of folklore. In 1944 he declared in a newspaper article entitled 'En defensa del folklore musical andino':

> The folkloric songs of the absolutely original peoples, of those who have no other music than folklore, cannot be interpreted by outsiders ... only the artist born in the community, who has inherited the genius of folklore, can interpret it and transmit it to the rest.[37]

Arguedas' comment referred to the performance of a famous Limeño interpreter of vernacular songs, Emperatriz Chávarri, whose artistic Quechua name was Ima Sumac (How Beautiful). Arguedas evaluated her interpretation of highland songs as a deformation of Indian music: 'A young woman who grew up in Lima, whose psychology was totally moulded by the influence of Limeño barrios could not be in worse conditions to attempt to become an interpreter of Indian music ... she has deformed the Andean song to make it accessible to the superficial, frivolous, and quotidian emotions of the urban public' (ibid).

The call for *amestizamiento* was far from unanimous, then, as Arguedas' commentary illustrates. Echoes of old *Indigenista* 'purism' combined with notions of racial proper places resonated in the writer's appraisal of Ima Sumac's performance. And these were not marginal ideas. In 1941 the Pan American Union promoted the creation of the Interamerican Indigenist Institute (*Instituto Indigenista Interamericano*), which established its headquarters in Mexico. When its Peruvian branch was created, Luis E. Valcárcel became its first President; later that same decade this scholar was appointed Minister of Education.[38]

During this period *Indigenismo* à la Valcárcel shed its previous oppositional thrust. It became the official state policy, antagonistic to the pro-mestizo rhetoric which, thus, became emblematic of anti-state positions, most specifically identified with the APRA, although this was not the only group to sponsor it. From his authoritative position, Valcárcel opposed *mestizaje*, and exhorted Cuzqueños in particular 'not to compromise in their pride as Incas, not to descend to the puerile condescension of *cholismo*,' as this was an 'embryonic state of evident inferiority, incipience, and barbarism ... a hybrid mixture in which only the accelerated disintegration of the 'colonial' is clearly perceived.'[39] Despite the forty years that had gone by since he first conceived his *Indigenista* project, Luis E. Valcárcel maintained his ideas about the prevalence of 'proper places' in the formation of social types. As late as the 1960s, he still considered the Indian who migrated to the city 'a deserter of his native cultural environment,' who on becoming culturally mestizo in the city, lived a marginal urban life, full of resentment and frustration (Valcárcel *et al.* 1964: 9–5) Paraphrasing Walter Benn Michaels' (1992) study of Melville Herskovits (a US contemporary of Valcárcel), *Indigenistas*' allegedly anti-racist culturalism could only be articulated through a commitment to racial identity. When the key semantic terrain changed from 'race' to 'ethnicity,' like the modern concept of 'race,' the phrase 'ethnic groups' presupposed clusters of people sharing an 'inherited' (and subaltern) culture. Inheritance, the consensual

underpinning of 'race' world-wide, continued to bound 'peoples' and 'their' cultural achievements. 'Race, by being relegated to the realm of nature, by contrast with ethnicity understood as cultural identity was reified as a distinct phenomenon', writes Verena Stolcke (1993). And 'ethnicity', I would add, served to legitimise 'natural' cultural hierarchies.

Under Valcárcel's influence, the Indigenist Peruvian Institute followed the 'assimilationist' Interamerican philosophy from a 'purist' point of view. In 1959, the Peruvian branch signed an agreement with the Indigenist Institute in Mexico to implement the National Plan for the Integration of the Aboriginal Population. The Plan defined Peru as 'a nation formed by two societies, and two cultures; one is the national Euro-American culture, and the other the Andean indigenous culture' (Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Indígenas, 1983: 57). It also considered that although the latter had to be improved, this task had to avoid the potential negative effects of *cholificación*, the local word for miscegenation. Although the word 'race' was obviously absent, it was only more obviously replaced by an organicist (and certainly evolutionist) concept of culture. Like 'race' this culture was used to bind individuals to geographic environments. In an original version of 'cultural' eugenic theory, Oscar Nuñez del Prado, an anthropologist from Cuzco, explained that the improvement of Indians 'should avoid the negative aspects of each culture while trying to maintain the most efficient ones in the fusion of both cultures.' The process, he continued, should avoid the formation of *cholos*, considered insecure and tormented individuals, who could not fully identify with either of the two cultures that formed Peru (Nuñez del Prado, 1970: 6).

In sharp contrast to the anti-state champions of *mestizaje*, official *Indigenismo* considered *cholos* deformed types living in an improper cultural environment. The debate between 'purity' vs hybridity had not disappeared. Using the conceptual kit provided by 'ethnicity,' *Indigenista* state intellectuals continued to portray *cholos* as contemptible types, unfit cultural hybrids who had left the countryside but could not survive in the city. In this sense, Peruvian purist *Indigenismo* strongly paralleled North American anti-abolitionist racial degeneration theories which considered freedom to be an unnatural environment for former black slaves, causing them to degenerate rapidly.[40]

It should come as no surprise that the rhetorical absence of 'race' from the academic scene did not imply the disappearance of hierarchical racial feelings. The opening quote by Basadre belongs to this period. Like him, Peruvian academics defined racism as conspicuous hate relations among people of different skin colour or cultures. The comparison between race relations in the United States and in Peru was a central component in this definition.[41] 'Why can the North Americans not learn from us the virtue of racial tolerance?' asked a well-known Peruvian critic, commenting on the race riots in Oxford, Mississippi in the 1960s.[42] 'Racial tolerance' had room for hierarchical racial feelings and non-egalitarian beliefs. Yet like *Indigenista's* abhorrence of hybridity in the previous period, it was also acquitted from racism.

THIRD PERIOD. CLASS SILENCES RACE AND CULTURE

Some emergent Marxist intellectuals in the 1920s embraced *Indigenismo*, and its idealist inspiration. Among them was the eminent thinker José Carlos Mariátegui, who was stimulated by liberal pro-Indian champions like Luis E. Valcárcel and José Antonio Encinas and the socialist Hildebrando Castro Pozo. Mariátegui's ideas dominated the

leftist social movement in Peru. Active during the period when 'race' prevailed as an analytical concept, he did not aim at replacing it, but at tempering biological and moral determinisms by adding an economic component to his analysis. Quoting Bukharin's *La Théorie du materialisme historique*, Mariátegui denied the 'fixed nature of races,' and proposed instead that races changed according to their surrounding material conditions. The degree of development of the productive forces, and not 'nature', determined races.[43] In the specific case of Peru and the rest of the Andean countries, 'the natural evolution [of the indigenous population] had been interrupted by the vile oppression of whites and mestizos, and had retrograded to the condition of dispersed agricultural tribes' (Mariátegui, 1981: 25).

Rather than racial, Mariátegui thought, the problem was 'social and economic, but race has a role in it and the means to confront it.' Socialism could and should 'transform the racial component in a revolutionary element.' Racial similarities were useful to develop 'class consciousness' among the oppressed. Indian peasants, he thought, would only listen to members of their own group. 'They will always mistrust whites and mestizos. Likewise, whites and mestizos will hardly self-impose the task of reaching the indigenous milieu to instruct them on classist ideas' (Mariátegui, 1981: 45, 33 and 44, respectively).

Mariátegui's vision of the 'productive forces' included the 'environment,' the main element of which were the 'relations of production.' In Peru, the 'environments' that harboured capitalist wage relationships were factories, mines, and haciendas. There, immersed in salaried relations of production, workers would understand oppression, develop class consciousness, and cancel racial prejudices. Class consciousness could even redeem mestizos and blacks, which this eminent thinker considered as the basest racial types: 'In the mestizo, only class consciousness will destroy the habitual scorn and repugnance he feels towards the Indian' (Mariátegui, 1981: 32). He also wrote: 'Industry, the factory, the union redeem the black from his domesticity. By erasing among the proletarians the frontiers of race, class consciousness elevates the black'.[44]

The largest part of the oppressed population, however, were Indians; hence redeeming the Indian race represented the imperative social and political socialist task (Mariátegui, 1968: 32). Mariátegui's Marxism embraced *Indigenismo.* Inspired by Valcárcel and Encinas and also coherent with his economic and environmental outline of race/culture, he asserted that: 'The indigenous race is a race of agriculturalists. The Inkaic people were peasant people dedicated to agriculture and herding' (Mariátegui, 1968: 45). The task of improving the Indian race had to be accomplished while preserving this historical symbiosis between individuals and land, because to 'remove the Indian from the land is to vary profoundly and possibly dangerously the race's ancestral tendencies' (Mariátegui, 1968: 33). Furthermore, these ancestral tendencies were a nest for 'germs of socialism' in the indigenous peasant community, a living organism that had survived the colonial centuries, thus demonstrating, 'the vitality of the indigenous communism impelling the aborigines to several forms of co-operation and association' (Mariátegui, 1968: 67–68). Co-operation and collective ideologies were inherent to the Indian race, and represented the empirical expression of a communist spirit. 'The community responds to that spirit. It is its organ' (ibid.: 68). Collective property inscribed in the environment produced a collective spirit, which was but a step away from being named class consciousness. The indigenous community, in its modern version as an agricultural co-operative, could potentially solve Indians' backward situation.

José Carlos Mariátegui coined a phrase that became popular during this third period: 'The Indian problem is the problem of the land.' The expression sought to confront the

hostile relationship between peasants and large landowners, which liberal *Indigenistas* had dodged. But the phrase also contained the implicit definition of Indians as 'an agricultural race,' and allusions to the role of the environment — and 'proper places' — in shaping racial/cultural social types. This eminent thinker died in 1930, but his ideas remained intensely alive. In the next 30 years (from the 1930s to the late 1960s) leftist political parties claimed 'Mariátegui's thought.'[45] Coinciding with the international discredit of racial thought, 'class' gradually absorbed everybody's race, and became the sole element in leftist rhetoric. For heirs of the geographic definition of race and of Mariátegui's lexicon, 'Indians' were highland peasants who could be *comuneros*, *pongos* or *colonos* (peasant community members, serves or hacienda labourers, respectively), depending on the 'relations of production' in which they were immersed. Workers of coastal haciendas were identified as '*asalariados rurales*,' while 'proletarian' referred to urban factory workers. These two categories were used instead of the labels *mestizos*, *cholos* or *zambos*, to name the *gente del pueblo* — those excluded from the *gente decente*. As is evident, 'class' definitions overlapped with previous geographic and idealist definitions of 'race,' and continued to be built in reference to the environment, which included labour conditions.

The new vocabulary did not entail the cancellation of racial hierarchies; rather it signified the definitive subordination of the Indian 'peasant' to the mestizo factory workers, and the transformation of the latter into proletarians redeemed of their immorality by class consciousness. In the 1930s, coinciding with the intellectual *pro-mestizaje* wave, Hildebrando Castro Pozo, founder of the Socialist Party, proclaimed that the mestizo should lead the Indian's struggle for land, because 'today and still for several decades the Indian will not know how to solve the problem of his lands, much less that of his culturisation' (Castro Pozo, 1934: 18). The former racial/cultural evolutionism thus lingered and legitimised the subordination of 'Indians' to more evolved social types. It was later articulated in a Marxist–Leninist political slogan coined by the Communist Party, according to which, although the peasantry was considered a force, the urban proletariat was its necessary vanguard.

Replacing racial labels with class rhetoric, leftist parties assumed the leadership of a nationwide social movement to organise rural unions, or *Sindicatos Rurales*. Led by the Communist Party, this movement coincided in time with the implementation of state-promoted *Indigenismo*. To nobody's surprise, Communists dismissed the official program as 'deceptive liberal politics, philo-indigenous cultural and juridical aid implemented by civilised whites and mestizos to help primitive Indians.'[46] Instead, the Communist party defined its activities as part of 'class struggle' and prioritised economic claims. No free labour, better salaries, and eight hour work-days were among the most important demands. Granted, members of *Sindicatos Rurales* were culturally (racially) Indians, but their class identity as peasants was more important in their struggle.

During this period leftists did not explicitly proclaim the inferiority of indigenous culture. Yet their political agendas subordinated racial/cultural differences to class struggle. Hugo Blanco was a famous union organiser and one of the few vocal Marxists who recognised that indigenous oppression was 'not simply economic.' Yet Blanco subordinated cultural domination to 'the problem of the land.' 'But the Indian [cultural] struggle,' he wrote, 'with all its richness is only one part of the entire Peruvian revolution. It exists, but there is no reason to exaggerate its importance' (Blanco, 1972: 133–134). Even though he admitted that the importance of culture merely was ancillary, his voice was an isolated voice among leftists. Similarly, he was alone in his identification of Indians as revolutionary.

Unlike Blanco, most intellectuals believed that Indians were 'unable to create leadership, because they depend emotionally on the old order' (Quijano, 1978: 148). Instead, they identified peasant leaders as *cholos*. In the sixties, a famous Peruvian intellectual, Aníbal Quijano, in a conference in Lima conclusively declared: 'Indian leadership does not exist in the present peasant movement. It shows up only exceptionally, and in an isolated way, and the Indian leader is himself becoming *cholo* (*el líder indio está él mismo en proceso de cholificación*)' (IEP, 1985: 60).

The above declarations conveyed a definition of Indians as illiterate, rural morons who needed the guidance of more educated 'classes' to survive in a national society dominated by the written word. More educated classes were — at least — '*cholos*.' Turn of the century intellectual beliefs in the role of education to transform the racial configuration of the country, and to create social differences among individuals substantially shaped Quijano's assertion, and his racial feelings. If in the 1920s *serrano* intellectuals had skirted their mestizo phenotype through access to academic education, in this third period intellectuals 'uplifted' literate peasant leaders by redefining them as '*cholos*,' and denying their Indianness. In the 1960s, identity labels were laden with references to cultural stages or degrees of class consciousness that obviously carried the imprint of previous bio-moral evolutionary thought. Rational knowledge, 'intelligence,' and formal education (traits of a superior stage of social development) legitimately founded social differences.

In the late 1960s the de-racialisation of identity concepts was rampant among leftists. The progressive military government that decreed in 1969 a radical Agrarian Reform, abolished the word 'Indian' from official vocabulary replacing it with 'peasant.' Similarly, at the other end of the leftist spectrum, in 1970 a radical leader pronounced that 'the influence of the race factor as the determining element of the class struggle must never be accepted' (Paredes, 1970: 31). And he added, 'if there is any differentiation that we can make among peasants it is not among Indian peasants, mestizo peasants, and white peasants, but rather between poor peasants, middle peasants, and rich peasants. The latter is a Marxist–Leninist criterion that helps the Party in its work, because the Party will lead the peasant movement.' Deriving their authority from their 'superior education' (*educación superior* is literally the Peruvian term to describe university education) intellectuals — and not workers — assumed the leadership of leftist parties. Regardless of how moderate or radical the group, the implicit idea was that academic knowledge of Marxist theory guaranteed a successful revolutionary path.[47] Lacking this superior form of knowledge, the peasants (definitely a gloss for Indians) occupied the lowest ranks in leftist groups. 'For the transformation of rebellion into revolution, peasants require the leadership of other classes,' proclaimed a well known leftist lawyer in the 1980s. He based his remark upon the 'observation' that in their land seizures, peasants were guided by 'magical-religious' beliefs in the Pachamama, a Quechua word meaning Mother Earth, and the putative utmost deity of Andean agriculturalists (García Sayán, 1982: 211–212). The implicit, yet obvious, idea was that such irrational beliefs belonged to inferior stages of knowledge, and were not politically reliable.

Like its conservative culturalist equivalent, progressive Marxist rhetoric accepted the social hierarchies that resulted from differences in education. Both rhetorics silently implied references to racial identities, mentioned only in moments of extreme academic or political need. The rhetorical silence into which race had receded was comfortable and convenient to both radical and conservative politicians. Both could continue to abide by hierarchical racial feelings that subordinated non-rational forms of thought while ignoring, and even

denying, their discriminatory practices and the historically implicit racism that undergirded their habits. Differences were legitimate, they derived from education, and after the revolution everybody would have access to it. Meanwhile the leadership was the leadership. The uneducated, deficient in Marxist theory and in class consciousness, had to submit to it.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

One of the discomforts that the civil war years (1980–1990) brought to Peruvian academics and politicians was the end of this silence in which 'race' had dwelled. Racial labels emerged abruptly in public through the figure of Alberto Fujimori and his electoral slogan '*chinitos y cholitos en contra de los blanquitos*' (*Chinitos* [Chinese] and little *cholos* against the little whites). Fujimori was surprising to the public not only because he was an unknown politician but also because 'racially' he did not belong to any of the categories used, in academic or daily life, to classify Peruvians. Fujimori's 'racial foreignness' exposed him to the overt scorn of socially white Peruvians, and particularly of his competitor, Mario Vargas Llosa and his followers. But more important, this 'foreignness' contributed to ending the cultural silence regarding 'race' until then prevalent in Peruvian political and academic spheres. Being 'Japanese' (or *chinito* as he identified himself) prevented Fujimori from silencing references to his phenotype, and implicitly 'passing' as white, a strategy available to prominent non-white intellectuals and politicians.

In stark contrast stood Mario Vargas Llosa, clearly representing the traditional dominant white society, the contemporary political heirs of Víctor Andrés Belaúnde, the *anti-Indigenista* intellectual of the early decades of the century. In an ironic historical twist, dating from the beginning of the war Vargas Llosa had gradually adopted what remained of *Indigenismo*, including Valcárcel's and Mariátegui's definition of Indians as peasants, and their beliefs that migration transformed them culturally/racially into mestizos. He thus reproduced ideas that bounded 'culture' to 'proper places.' Let me quote him:

> Indian peasants live in such a primitive way that communication is practically impossible. It is only when they move to the cities that they have the opportunity to mingle with the other Peru. The price they must pay for integration is high–renunciation of their culture, their language, their beliefs, their traditions, and customs, and the adoption of the culture of their ancient masters. After one generation they become mestizos. They are no longer Indians. (...) (Vargas Llosa, 1990: 49).

But even more ironic, Vargas Llosa shared Varcárcel and Mariátegui's teachings with Antonio Díaz Martínez, one of the leaders of the Shining Path. Díaz Martínez used geographically determined culture and class to define peasants as those agriculturalists who felt such 'love, attachment and gratitude for the Pachamama that they were unable to break their ties with her.' Like the right-wing writer, he believed that 'the clash between the westernised cities and the indigenous communities ... prevented the technological modernisation of the community, which [instead] resorted to the magical and conventional principles of its own culture' (Díaz Marínez, 1969: 249).

In the 1990s Abimael Guzmán the intellectual leader of the Shining Path and Mario Vargas Llosa, the extremes of the Peruvian political spectrum, shared a crude evolutionism that posited incommensurable differences between the 'indigenous society' and the one to be constructed under each of their projects. Both likewise venerated rational knowledge as the founding principle of their programs. Belief in the inferiority of indigenous pre-rational

knowledge unquestionably and absolutely subordinated 'that' society to their intellectual and social paradigms.

As historical products of Peruvian academic history, both leaders blindly believed in an indisputable superiority of their personas, derived from their academic knowledge. The Shining Path expressed this idea shamelessly in its slogan '*encarnar el pensamiento Gonzalo*' (to incarnate Gonzalo's thought).[48] With this metaphor Abimael Guzmán conveyed his intellectual superiority, and told his constituency that by embodying his ideas they would gain the potential to transform themselves into the superior being that mastering 'knowledge' had made of him. Vargas Llosa boasted his intellectual superiority in a scornful evaluation of the populist success of his once electoral opponent:

> The regime inaugurated by Alberto Fujimori in April 1992 is the political expression of an informal country which harbours *chicha* culture ... a country turned amoral by the excess of reigning political immorality and characterised by a political pragmatism void of [moral] principles ... in Fujimori, an engineer, informal Peruvians perceived one of themselves .... (Vargas Llosa, 1996: 333)

The parallel between 'informality' and 'lack of education' is arrogantly obvious in the above paragraph, where '*chicha culture*' — the current label to designate contemporary vernacular culture — stands in inferior opposition to 'real' culture. But more intriguing is the resurrection in the 1990s, of the 1920s antagonism between *serranos* and *costeños*, evident in Vargas Llosa's evaluation of contemporary Peru as 'the concoction, confusion, amalgam, jumble (*mescolanza, confusión, amalgama, entrevero*), ... that result from the forced cohabitation of millions of Peruvians of *serrano* origin with the coastal people or with the westernised inhabitants of the Andean cities' (ibid.: 331). The phrase clearly echoes old fears of the disorders that hybridity allegedly produced.

Like early 20th-century intellectuals, both Guzmán and Vargas Llosa appealed to the 'natural' powers of scientific knowledge to disqualify and subordinate legitimately the 'cultural' or 'class' underprivileged. The positivist/idealist conceptual definition of race modern Marxists and liberals coined in the 1920s, had become in the post-modern 1980s part of the lived culture of intellectuals themselves. This lived culture (and not just the concept) was replete with hierarchical racial feelings. Transformed into geographically bounded 'culture,' the idealist definition of race was implicitly present in the latest Marxist and liberal versions of Peruvian political projects. Moreover, it was unknowingly shared by its promoters Abimael Guzmán and Mario Vargas Llosa, who, as heirs of mid-century Peruvian intellectuals, also expressed their superiority using de-racialised class and cultural vocabularies respectively. Their innovation as late 20th-century intellectuals was their (also shared) belief in the 'naturalness' of violence in Peru. In this respect, Abimael Guzmán's phrase '*salvo el poder todo es ilusión*' is notorious, as is the class fundamentalism it expresses. Less well-known is Vargas Llosa's equally infamous phrase 'Ethnic violence exists in any society which, like ours, harbours different cultures and traditions.'[49] If Guzmán's phrase expressed class fundamentalism, Vargas Llosa's expression can be deemed as cultural fundamentalism, or the supposition that humans are inherently ethnocentric, incapable of communicating cross-culturally, and therefore inter-cultural relations are by 'nature' hostile.[50]

Certainly both extreme projects expressed what some analysts of contemporary European forms of exclusion have qualified as 'racism without race,' 'new racism,' or 'cultural fundamentalism' (Stolcke, 1995; Gilroy, 1987; Balibar, 1988). However, whether based in

'class' or 'cultural' rhetoric, contemporary Peruvian discriminatory intellectual practices do not derive (as Stolcke (1995) has remarked for the European case) from 19th-century conceptions of nation-state that excluded the 'authentic' nationals from the assimilated ones. Rather, Peruvian silent racism acknowledges the right of every Peruvian to belong to the nation. Yet it also positions individuals on a differentiated scale according to their intellectual capacity and academic knowledge. This justification rests on an evolutionary assumption that privileges rational knowledge over so-called pre-rational wisdom. Culturalist rhetoric opposes scientific knowledge to 'folkloric' or 'indigenous' culture, while class discourse posits 'class consciousness' as the superior form of rational knowledge.

Silent racism presupposes that intellectuals incarnate (like in the Shining Path slogan) these superior forms of knowledge and are thus legitimately destined for political leadership. It became silent through the historical layering of rhetorics of exclusion that successively naturalised social hierarchies using the concepts of race, culture, or class. The underpinning idea in all three periods was that the differences were 'inherited,' and therefore historically inevitable. Throughout the century, the promise of future equality justified present inequality. The shift from 'race' to 'culture' and 'class' on both academic and daily life rhetorics has not meant the end of discrimination. Rather, discrimination is currently legitimated by the liberal emphasis on the redemptive power of 'education,' just as it was in the 1920s when scientific beliefs in 'race' prevailed. Although no longer (necessarily) associated with it, the feelings of intellectual superiority that underpinned the modern concept of 'race,' have seeped into 'culture' and 'class' discourses to naturalise social differences and legitimate hierarchical racial feelings. However, moving away from race has provided academics with a comfortable self-acquittal of racist guilt, without eradicating racism, which now cohabits with gender, class, and geographic discrimination. The hegemony of Western hierarchies deriving from formal education makes 'racism' without race not only possible but virtually invulnerable.

NOTES

1. Benedict (1942: 131). Quoted in Biddis (1966).
2. See Gilroy (1987); Omi and Winant (1986).
3. About the insurgence of provincial intellectuals in Lima see Cueto (1982).
4. I have elaborated *decencia* in De la Cadena (1996).
5. The idea of 'racial feelings' is a conceptual paraphrase Raymond Williams' notion of structure of feelings as 'meanings and values actively lived and felt' (see Williams, 1985: 128–135).
6. About 19th- and 20th-century conceptual debates on the definition of 'race' see Mosse (1978), Banton (1987), Stepan (1982), Barkan (1992), Young (1995), among many others.
7. See about this, Hale (1984), Rama (1996).
8. See Graham (1990), Skidmore (1993), among others.
9. Prado (1909: 52), quoted in Cueto (1982: 4).
10. About the development of *idealismo* and *positivismo* in Peru see Sobrevilla (1996).
11. Obviously this was not invented by Peruvian intellectuals. Blumenbach in the 18th century had already resorted to ideas about mental and moral qualities in his conceptualisation of race. See Gould (1981: 410).
12. About Mexico, Brazil and Argentina see Stepan (1991).
13. Mariátegui (1928), Mariátegui (1929). Also in Mariátegui (1981: 34).
14. This is not to say that Peruvian intellectuals had directly read Lamarck's theories. Gould (1981: 401) mentions that Lamarckism, defined as 'the inheritance of acquired characters', was folk wisdom since the late 18th century. According to Stepan (1991: 136) one of the attractions of Lamarckism was that it was believed to be inherently anti-racist.
15. This idea was shared by intellectuals almost worldwide. See Williams (1973), Rama (1996).

16. *Diario El Sol* (Cusco), 17 November 1921, p.2.
17. *Diario El Sol* (Cusco), 20 January 1929.
18. About *indigenismo* see Rénique (1991), Poole (1997), De la Cadena (1995).
19. See Sánchez (1925).
20. About intellectual and state constructions of the dichotomy self/other in Southern Africa see Callaway (1993).
21. About the 'non-markedness' of whiteness see Frankenberg (1993), Williams, B. (1989).
22. Regarding these aspects of racial thought see Stepan (1985).
23. *Indigenistas* of diverse political tendencies concurred in their rejection of hybridity. For example Valcárcel and José Angel Escalante, ardent anti-Leguiista and Leguiista, respectively, concurred in their rejection of hybridity and mestizos, which according to the latter had 'blemished the racial complexion' of the country. See Escalante (1975 [1925]).
24. According to Gose, the colonial definition of *raza* already referred to internal religious differences to define the identity of individuals. It was phrased as *pureza de sangre* and alluded to morality as its most important feature. See Gose (1996).
25. The word *misti* designates an 'outsider' to an indigenous community. The label applies both to socially mestizos and to socially whites. *Chuño* is dehydrated potato, a staple elaborated in the highest reaches of the Andean Sierra.
26. *Diario El Sol*, 30 July 1919.
27. I have borrowed the phrase 'key semantic terrain' from Benthall and Knight (1993).
28. Regarding Mexican *indigenismo*, see Knight (1990).
29. Countering his mentor, José Vasconcelos in the 1920s even Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre opposed the 'assimilationist' project. The latter changed his mind in the 1930s (Haddox, 1989). Related to Rodó's influence on Latin American intellectuals, see Hale (1984).
30. *Diario El Sol* (Cusco), 17 January 1928.
31. In addition to APRA and the Communist Party, a political front called the Revolutionary Union (Unión Revolucionaria) participated in the 1931 presidential elections. It was led by Sánchez Cerro, who was elected President with the support of the old aristocracy. He was assassinated in 1933, and Oscar R. Benavides succeeded him and governed until 1939. Benavides outlawed Apra and the Communist Party. Manuel Prado, an aristocrat, was elected and ruled until 1945. That year both parties finally came out of clandestinity, only to be outlawed again in 1948, by another military coup led by Manuel A. Odría, who governed until 1956. See Kapsoli, 1977.
32. See Barkan (1992: 271–341).
33. This shift represented an international political reaction against World War II. See Montagu (1962).
34. One of its proponents stated: '*Mestizaje* is a universal law to which only a few small "pure race" minorities escape; it is a transitional stage in the spiritual process of America' (Sivirichi, 1938).
35. See John Haddox (1989) for information related to the Mexican influence on the Aprista version of "Indoamerica."
36. Regarding neo-Indianism see De la Cadena (1996).
37. Arguedas in *La Prensa*, 19 November 1944. Later published in Arguedas (1976).
38. Valcárcel (1981: 339).
39. Valcárcel (1944). Quoted in Varallanos (1965).
40. See Stepan (1985: 101).
41. On the subject see also Wade (1993).
42. Quoted in Pitt Rivers (1965).
43. This idea, and the rest of Mariátegui's racial thought that I present here, are in *El Problema de las razas en América Latina*, a paper presented at the First Latin-American Communist Conference in 1929 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was published in Mariátegui (1981).
44. Mariátegui (1929) in *Mundial*, 467. This writer did not hide the disgust he felt towards blacks. Appealing to notions of 'racial proper places' he justified his racial feelings arguing that blacks were not representatives of the authentic Peru, which he defined as Indian. Blacks he said, had cohabited with Spaniards for centuries, and had in-bred pro-Hispanic inclinations. Unabashedly Mariátegui wrote about 'the black': 'Whenever he has mixed with the Indian, he has bastardised him, transmitting [to the Indian] his philandering domesticity and his morbid, extroverted psychology' (Mariátegui, 1981: 264–265).
45. See Letts (1981).
46. Quoted in Rénique (1991: 173).

47. For example when Letts, a famous Peruvian leftist activist, criticised a rural upheaval that had occurred in Jauja in 1962, he found that the failure of the movement had been caused by its participants' 'total ignorance of the Marxist method and of revolutionary theory, as well as of the real processes of socialist revolutions' (Letts, 1981: 26).
48. Gonzalo was Abimael Guzmán's *nom de guerre.*
49. Mario Vargas Llosa, *El País* July, 1990.
50. Stolcke (1995).

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